

ITALY – THE COUNTRY WITH THE LARGEST NUMBER OF ROMANIAN EMIGRANTS

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Abstract: *This paper aims to highlight aspects that led to the migration of Romanians to Italy, their number in the peninsula, and their distribution by geographical areas. Italy needs workers in almost all sectors of activity. Thus we find Romanians working in agriculture, construction, tourism, but also in the health system. From the statistical data published for the last 3 years, we notice that the number of Romanian residents is constantly growing, which shows us that Romanians are satisfied with the conditions they find in this destination country. We will highlight here that at this moment, in Italy we are talking about migration for the whole family. In this sense, we find families who have reorganized their lifestyles, adapting to everything that the host country has to offer. For most of them, these were very important and played a decisive role in the choice made. Thus, the health system, the education system, the social system, and not only are considered to be much better than those in Romania. Romania being part of the EU offers Romanian workers from other member countries and not only, the opportunity to benefit from capitalizing on the years they worked in another country, contributing to the public pension system. Thus, using the pro-rata principle, the years in which the taxpayer has completed a contribution period, regardless of the country, for the opening of pension rights are totaled, following that each country will grant a pension for the actual contributions to its budget. The Italian authorities have a social system ready to provide benefits to all residents so that they can continue their lifestyle acquired during work and retirement. We will make a short presentation of a program launched by the Italian state for its citizens and residents, which can be accessed from 01.02.2019 to 31.12.2020, Quota 100.*

Keywords: *migration; emigrants; work force; pension system; quota 100.*

JEL Classification: *J61; H55.*

1. Introduction

With the fall of the communist regime, after 1989, Romanian citizens started looking for jobs in economically developed countries. In all the countries of Western Europe there is a large number of Romanian citizens, but most of them went to Italy and Spain.

Immediately after the 1989 Revolution, endless queues were formed at the County Employment Agencies. They brokered contracts between Italian and Spanish companies. Romanian workers left with legal forms of employment, during seasonal periods, in agriculture and construction.

Starting with the date of Romania's entry into the European Union, the labor legislation has been simplified. Therefore, any citizen of the EU has the right to work in the territory of the Union. Romanian citizens left alone to find work. Thus, migration for work, for a better life, is the main reason behind the decision to migrate. The recipient countries have experienced economic growth due to the influx of migrants into understaffed areas. Migrants are young people, active in the labor market.

2. Literature review

Migration is a complex process that began in ancient times, with the formation of states. Over time, this process has expanded and undergone changes in both form and approach to the concept. The migration phenomenon is now present all over the world. Thus, some countries, recognized for the large number of accepted emigrants, are culturally enriched by ethnic diversity. Soon the notion of multiethnic state will be more and more common.

Migration is a complex phenomenon, which consists in the movement of people from one territorial area to another, followed by a change of residence and / or employment in a form of activity in the arrival area (Rotariu et al, 1998).

Ernst Georg Ravenstein, a German geographer, is considered the father of migration theories because he set out the first laws of migration.

Although they are considered to be very inflexible and of a generally valid nature, they are fundamental to the following theories of migration: migrants usually travel short geographical distances; those who travel longer distances go to large industrial and commercial centers; the direction of migration is as follows: from agricultural to industrial areas; the population of large urban settlements is increasing due to migration and not due to the positive natural increase; the volume of migration increases with the development of industry, trade and transport; each migration flow will be followed by a decrease in the migration volume; women predominate in migration processes, at least in short-distance migration, and men represent a majority in international migration processes; the major causes of migration are economic (Haruta, 2018).

The migration process is considered to be a complex of migration, emigration and return of an individual or a group of individuals, from one space to another, caused by various factors, such as economic, social, psychological, religious. We mention the "push-pull" model (Ravenstein) which highlights the factors that attracted the "pull" in the destination country and the "push" factors, which push from the country of origin.

"Pull" factors refer to: more jobs, well-paid jobs, a different lifestyle, religious and sexual freedoms, a favorable climate and security.

The "push" factors refer to: lack of jobs, very low paid jobs, political, religious persecution, corruption, natural disasters and economic instability (Fieraru, 2011).

3. The situation of the Romanian emigrants in Italy

For the Romanians who left the country, the most important aspect was the economic one. Romania had not been able to offer jobs to its citizens, economic and financial stability, political and social stability. Thus, the situation that the country offered, "pushed" the citizens to other countries. One of the countries that attracted the Romanians and was able to offer them well-paid jobs was Italy.

According to statistics, Italy is one of the countries that hosts the most Romanians. In the first emigration scenario, it was the economic factor. Then the large number of Romanians in the peninsula was given by the unification, the reunification of the families.

Thus, we will focus our attention on the Romanian population in this country, its distribution on the 20 areas, the main activities carried out by Romanians, as well as remittances. We will also highlight the benefits that the Italian state offers to its residents. One of them is "quota 100", a program launched in January 2019, valid until 31.12.2020.

The main sectors of activity in which Romanians work are construction and agriculture, where men generally work. In the field of services, housekeeping, hotel industry, restaurants, elderly care and trade, we find mostly women. Romanians went in search of a job, so that about 80% are workers, carrying out execution activities, but there are also those who had the courage to set up businesses, especially in the field of construction. In 2018, 7000 companies were active. The children born in Italy to Romanian parents become businessmen in fields where their parents began working as emigrants after the 1990s.

The passing of the years, the simplification of the legislation through free movement and the right to work made us have a large community of Romanians in Italy. Those Romanians who have not lost their values, who work for a better lifestyle. Being a large community, Romania has in Italy not only the Embassy in Rome, but also other Consular Offices, in order to meet their needs.

In the following chart we will present the number of Romanian residents in Italy, distributed by areas.

In the graph we notice that most Romanians settled in the center and in the north. Thus, the regions of Lazio, Lombardy, Piedmont, Veneto, Emilia Romagna and Tuscany have the largest community of Romanians, which has grown steadily in the last 3 years.

We notice an increase in the number of residents in 2017 by 1.49% compared to 2016, in 2018, by 1.84% compared to 2017 and in 2019 by 1.42% compared to 2018. The number of Romanian citizens in Italy is growing steadily, not very high, between 1 and 1.5% compared to previous years.

Table 1 presents the number of Romanian residents by gender, between 2010-2019. The number of Romanian female residents has been constantly increasing since 2010. We are thus witnessing the "feminization of migration". The growth trend is also present in the male gender, but the total share is kept by the female part, throughout the 10 years analyzed.

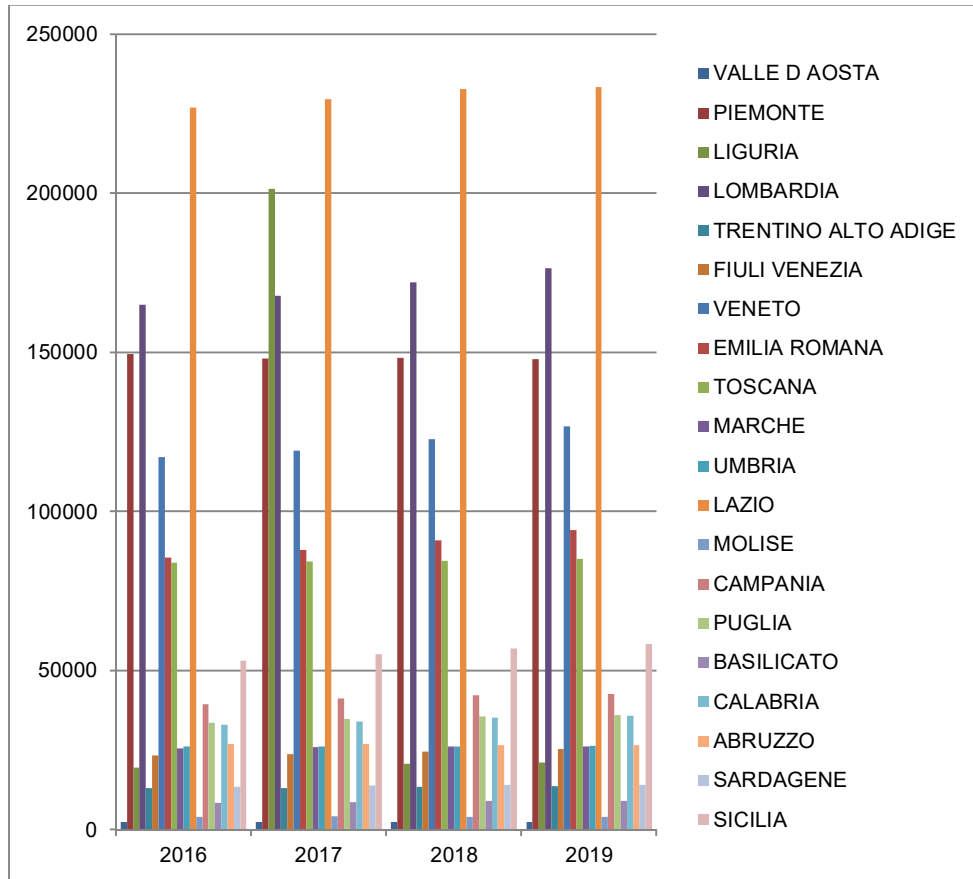


Figure 1: Total number of Romanian residents in Italy, distributed by areas
Source: <http://mae.ro/>

Table 1: The number of Romanian residents in Italy by gender between 2010-2019

Year	Male	Female	Total
2010	409.464	478.299	887.763
2011	439.311	529.265	968.576
2012	361.440	473.025	834.465
2013	402.766	530.588	933.354
2014	467.630	613.770	1.081.400
2015	487.203	644.636	1.131.839
2016	492.737	658.658	1.151.395
2017	497.577	670.975	1.168.552
2018	505.961	684.130	1.119.091
2019	513.289	693.649	1.206.938

Source: www.dati.istat.it

Table 2: The situation of Romanian residents in Italy by gender and region, on 01.01.2019

Region	Male	Female	Total	Percent (%)	The share in the total number of foreign residents
Lazio	105.009	128.460	233.469	19,3	34,16
Lombardia	79.608	96.974	176.582	14,6	14,94
Piemonte	64.675	83.241	147.916	12,3	34,57
Veneto	56.396	70.516	126.912	10,5	25,33
Emilia Romania	38.719	55.553	94.272	7,8	17,22
Toscana	32.321	52.774	85.095	7,1	20,39
Sicilia	23.870	34.610	58.480	4,8	29,24
Campania	17.778	25.030	42.808	3,5	16,14
Puglia	13.694	22.396	36.090	3,0	26,00
Calabria	15.743	20.108	35.851	3,0	31,70
Abruzzo	10.772	15.884	26.656	2,2	29,85
Umbria	9.724	16.785	26.509	2,2	27,18
Marche	9.040	17.167	26.207	2,2	19,14
Friuli Venezia	11.025	14.517	25.357	2,1	23,01
Liguria	8.587	12.517	21.104	1,7	14,42
Sardegna	4.564	9.578	14.143	1,2	25,30
Trentino –Alto Adige	5.704	8.106	13.810	1,1	14,13
Basilicata	3.580	5.541	9.121	0,8	39,29
Molise	1.571	2.510	4.081	0,3	29,36
Valle d Aosta	908	1.567	2.475	0,2	29,84
Total	513.289	693.649	1.206.938		23,0 %

Source: www.tuttaitalia.it

We are analyzing the situation of Romanians residing in each region of Italy, as well as the share of Romanians in the total number of foreign citizens.

In the Lazio region we identify the largest community of Romanians. Their share in the total number of foreign residents is also among the highest. Analyzing each region, we notice that the number of women resident in Italy is considerably higher than that of men, with a percentage of 14.9%. In recent years, many women have gone to work in the health field, especially in the care of the elderly, in specially arranged centers or at their homes.

Regardless of the field in which they work, it is certain that these workers achieve considerably higher incomes than in our country. Thus, they constantly send money home for the family left in the country. These sums of money, called remittances, have a major impact on the national economy. According to statistics, Romanians in Italy send large sums of money annually, amounting to millions of Euros. In 2018, they sent approximately 730.74 million Euros.

The 600,000 Romanians aged 18-64 who work and pay contributions in the peninsula bring an important contribution to the revenues from taxes and duties of the Italian state. On the 2nd place after the Romanians, there are the Albanians. The

contribution of Romanians is 0.75 billion Euros to the Italian economic system. The Italian state is well aware of the major contribution that residents make to Italy's economic system, including social security. In order to meet them, in January 2019, the government launched the "quota 100" program, through which residents are entitled to other social benefits, in conjunction with community agreements on the pension system. This program can be accessed until 31.12.2020.

4. Quota 100

European citizens working in Italy and contributing to the pension fund are entitled to pension benefits (old-age, early retirement, sickness and survivor's pension), fulfilling the same conditions as the Italian citizens.

According to the European legislation contained in the European regulations on the pension system, the periods spent by a citizen on the territory of the Member States are totaled, with each country granting a pension for the actual contributions to its own budget, and the Community pension being established according to the "pro-quota" system.

The standard age in Italy is 67 years for both men and women, with a contribution period of at least 20 years. At the date of the request, it is mandatory for the activity to cease.

Starting with 01.02.2019, resident persons who cumulatively meet the following conditions may apply for registration. Thus, the applicants must be at least 62 years old, either men or women, at least one year of experience in Italy, at least 38 years of contribution in Romania or another EU member state of which 35 years representing only the period actually worked. Cessation of activity before submitting the application, prohibition of the right to carry out activity on the basis of an employment contract until reaching the age of 67 are mandatory conditions. In order to achieve the 38 years, the periods in which they have completed their military service, attended university courses or benefited from medical leave cannot be taken into account.

5. Conclusions

Italy received the Romanians who wanted to work, it offered them not only a job, but also a lifestyle. The large number of Romanian residents gives us the image of citizens who have adapted very well to the conditions, have found enough reasons to stay in Italy and not to choose another destination country.

Given that this country offers social benefits for either young people or their families, free school for children, social benefits for the elderly, we wonder how it is that in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, many fellow countrymen returned home. The main reason would be "undeclared work". Thus, not having legal employment contracts, not contributing to the social insurance and health budgets, they could not receive any help from the Italian state. In the current context, emergency care was received only by those who needed hospitalization. The rest had to remain isolated in the house, and the money saved did not allow them to do so. They had to return. It is easy to understand that the Italian state needs seasonal Romanians for work in

the field of agriculture, in the field of construction but also in tourism, including hotels and restaurants. Italy's economy must be restarted, and the Romanians will contribute through their work, because everyone wants everything to return to the situation before the COVID-19 pandemic.

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